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4-14-58

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: U. S. Policy on Control and Reduction of Armed Forces and Armaments

1. The Working Group has been directed to report by 15 April its initial assessment on the adequacy of United States disarmament policy and the opportunities for new United States initiative in this field.

2. Basic United States policy provides that the United States actively seek "a comprehensive, phased and safeguarded international system for the regulation and reduction of armed forces and armaments. * * * As the initial step in this international arms system, the United States should give priority to early agreement on the implementation of measures which would reduce the risk of general nuclear war."

3. Discussions in the meetings of the United Nations Disarmament Sub-Committee and in the United Nations General Assembly have served to demonstrate that the achievement of agreement on a comprehensive disarmament arrangement is not likely in the near future. Since 1955 the United States and our Western Allies have sought agreement with the USSR on initial steps which, if accepted and satisfactorily executed, might mark the beginning of a safeguarded system susceptible of progressive expansion under propitious conditions. Our most recent position, resulting from decisions taken by the President on June 11, 1957, was thoroughly coordinated with our NATO Allies and exhaustively discussed in the London meetings of the United Nations Disarmament Sub-Committee and in the General Assembly. The USSR rejected these proposals.

4. The United States proposals have been criticized as being (a) too detailed and complex for the layman to comprehend and (b) too rigid, in that they constitute an inseparable package. It would be advantageous, therefore,

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if the United States position could be so formulated and presented as to remove the bases for these criticisms without compromising our basic disarmament objectives.

5. After a preliminary survey, the Working Group concludes that certain steps are open to the United States which, if adopted, would offer opportunities for new United States initiative in the field of Disarmament. These opportunities will vary in degree depending upon the basic decision as to whether and when the United States can, without jeopardizing vital security interests, enter into an agreement for the suspension of nuclear weapons testing.

6. The Working Group recognizes that the decision regarding the suspension of nuclear weapons testing in all likelihood will not be taken until the forthcoming test series is completed and a subsequent assessment of the military and political factors which bear upon this problem has been made. The Working Group considers that it is not within its competence to recommend, at this time, what the decision should be. The Group therefore proposes to address itself to its task under two separate assumptions:

(a) The United States decides it is prepared to agree at a Summit conference to the immediate suspension of nuclear weapons testing under safeguarded conditions.

(b) The United States decides it is not prepared to agree to the immediate suspension of nuclear weapons testing.

7. It seems apparent that it will not be possible to negotiate at one meeting, and particularly at a Summit meeting, an agreement covering all the elements of the present United States position and that some deviation from the "one package" concept will therefore be required. The Working Group considers that the separate elements of our present disarmament proposals are

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adequate and should be retained, generally in their present form, as objectives to be sought in our disarmament negotiations. They feel, however, that this should not preclude establishing priorities among the elements which would permit concentrating our negotiating efforts on those items which have a greater urgency or greater collateral benefits from a United States point of view and which hold some prospect of agreement, assuming the Soviets do, in fact, desire to reach agreement. The Group considers that our position could then be presented in uncomplicated and simple terms which, if accepted, will represent an advance toward our disarmament objectives or, if rejected, will appeal to the world as fair and reasonable propositions. The Group considers that this tactic should be adopted at a Summit meeting. They will, in due course, present for consideration an approach along this line.